

information. That's what we do the most of probably is compiling records and giving access to records to various organizations, individuals, and corporations. And when it comes down to it, we talk about the price. This is a very important part of the debate tonight because wealth is really at the heart of this battle that is forming tonight and whether that wealth should be made on information that is public information gathered by the state. So we begin our debate with trying to assess, and this is what these first committee amendments draw our attention to, on what kind of principles are we going to base our debate on and what kind of principles are we going to find agreement on that should be decided upon in LB 1375. Now we are not the first ones to have this debate, but we are a little slow in getting to it. As we advance to the twenty-first century, the information age has exploded. And part of that is because no one could have predicted ten years ago even that practically every home, that every business would have to become computer literate, would have to have that kind of electronic access and information base. We found, as a matter of fact, on Internet that Minnesota has dealt with this same problem or this same opportunity you might say because opportunity is certainly what it is. Our citizens are going to demand information through the electronic media. And I have to point out here that actually our information is compiled and updated by state at the public expense. That information is actually accessed at a less expensive price than the hard copy. And I know some have questioned that, but actually when you look at it, the electronic access to information after it is properly set up is actually should be cheaper than to do the hard copy and the mailing and other forms of the old way of...

SENATOR COORDSEN: One minute.

SENATOR PIRSCH: ...disseminating information. I'll put on my light again because I want to share with you some of the principles that were discussed and adopted in Minnesota which formed a government information access council in January of '96, not too long ago. Already they're out on their electronic airwaves and available across the country, indeed internationally on this new electronic media that we are going to be discussing tonight.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you, Senator Pirsch. Senator Preister.